

PARTING AND REFINING BULLION.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

TRANSMITTING

Copy of a communication from the Director of the Mint, recommending certain legislation in the matter of parting and refining of bullion, &c.

JANUARY 21, 1887.—Referred to the Committee on Coinage, Weights, and Measures and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, January 20, 1887.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith, for the consideration of Congress, copy of letter of the Director of the Mint, of the 12th instant, and inclosure, recommending certain legislation in the matter of parting and refining bullion by which the sale of the by-products of acid refineries can be applied to the reduction of the expenses of such refineries.

Respectfully, yours,

D. MANNING,
Secretary.

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
BUREAU OF THE MINT,
Washington, D. C., January 12, 1887.

SIR: Paragraph 8, page 379, of the Supplement to the Revised Statutes of the United States, provides—

And refining and parting of bullion shall be carried on at the mints of the United States and at the assay office at New York.

And it shall be lawful to apply the money arising from charge collected from depositors for these operations pursuant to law so far as may be necessary to the defraying in full of the expenses thereof, including labor, materials, and wastage.

But no part of the moneys otherwise appropriated for the support of the mints and the assay office at New York shall be used to defray the expenses of refining and parting bullion.

Under this provision of law, which was passed originally in the appropriation act approved August 15, 1876 (19 Stats., 156, 157), the charges for parting and refining bullion were so fixed at the several coinage mints and the assay office at New York that the receipts should equal, as nearly as possible, the expenses of the operations. The spent acid and blue vitriol resulting from the processes of refining, prior to October 24, 1885, have been credited on the bills for acid, thereby reducing the expenses of the refinery at the New York assay office some \$20,000 a year. On the 24th October, 1885, the First Comptroller decided that the receipts from spent acid and blue vitriol must be considered as old material and, under section 3618, Revised Statutes, deposited in the Treasury. In the Report of this Bureau for the last fiscal year, pages 6 and 7, I have referred to the effect of this ruling in the accounts of the assay office at New York. A similar effect will be produced upon the accounts of the whole mint service, in that the expenditure will not appear to have been diminished by regular manufacturing assets.

A still more important effect of this ruling is to render the acid refineries of the mint service, under the present schedule of charges, no longer able to be self-supporting, as the law requires.

It will be necessary, therefore, either to increase the schedule of charges imposed upon depositors of bullion, or modify the law so as to explicitly provide for the application of the proceeds of the sale of the by-products of the acid refineries of the mints and assay offices of the United States to the reduction of the expenses of the operations of such acid refineries.

I have the honor to recommend the latter alternative, and beg to suggest that paragraph 8, page 379, of the Supplement to the Revised Statutes, be re-enacted in the legislative appropriation bill for the fiscal year 1888, so as to read as follows:

And refining and parting of bullion shall be carried on at the mints of the United States and at the assay office at New York.

And it shall be lawful to apply, pursuant to law, the moneys arising from charges collected from depositors and from the proceeds of the sale of by-products, resulting from the operations of the refinery, so far as may be necessary to the defraying in full of the expenses thereof, including labor, materials, and wastage.

But no part of the moneys otherwise appropriated for the support of the mints and the assay office at New York shall be used to defray the expenses of refining and parting bullion.

Hoping that you will be pleased to present this matter to the consideration of Congress,

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES S. KIMBALL,

Director of the Mint.

The SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

[Indorsement.]

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, *January 14, 1887.*

Respectfully referred to the First Comptroller for report.

HUGH S. THOMPSON,

Assistant Secretary.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
FIRST COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE,
Washington, D. C., January 15, 1887.

SIR: I have examined the letter of the Hon. James P. Kimball, Director of the Mint, to you, of January 12, 1887, in regard to appending a clause to the bill making appropriations for the legislative, executive, and judicial departments of the Government, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1888, containing a provision similar to that which was in the bill for 1876, found in 19 Stat., 156-7, which letter you have referred to me for report.

In reply, I will say I see no good reason why such a clause should not be appended to the bill in question.

The letter of the Director of the Mint is herewith returned.

Very respectfully,

M. J. DURHAM,
Comptroller.

The SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

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